

Sermon Reflections

God's Bitter Plans (Faith through Bitter Days) (Ruth 1:1-22)

Summary: **How can we trust a sovereign God when bad things happen to us?** Remember these four guiding truths that will sustain your faith through dark, bitter days.

Rick started his message quoting Rabbi Kushner's book: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" One of the concepts that Kushner posits is that God is good, but He really doesn't have control over His creation. How would you explain to someone why that idea is false?

Or the other idea: God is in control, but He is not really "good" — how would you defend against this heresy?

1. Difficulty will come with God's plans (vv. 1-6)

- In the book of Ruth, why did God cause the famine? What else did God allow, just when they likely thought life could not get worse?
- Naomi lost all hope, didn't she? Have you ever lost all hope? Can you look back now and see how God was providentially working behind the scenes for your good and His glory? Can you see how God broke into your situation/problem to help you because He is full of compassion, love and mercy? Do you care to testify to that right now?
- It's ironic that we really can trust God because He has already told us that bad things are going to happen. Can you support that premise from Scripture? If so, provide an example.

2. Despair may come into your heart (vv. 7-13)

- How did Naomi misapply and misunderstand the sovereignty of God?
- When we counsel with people (or even ourselves!) how should we encourage someone as they go through a difficult time or season of life?

3. Devotion can be found with God's people (vv. 14-18)

- Why was Naomi the worst evangelist ever? How did Ruth respond in faith to Naomi's depressing recommendation? Ruth, a Moabitess and a Gentile, had the right confession, did she not? Application: church, don't let your brother and sister in Christ suffer alone. Practically speaking, how can you begin to do that here at GBC?

4. Dismay can linger with your outlook (vv. 19-22)

- Rick mentioned that "God's love is not known by His providences — His love is known by His promises." If that's the case, then how should we react/think about our lives and the problems that arise? Romans 8:28-30 provide the right perspective for a Christian. How does the Gospel change life under the sun?